



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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CHAIRMAN
EDUCATION COMMITTEE

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Chairman Gomes, Chairman Tercyak, and distinguished members of the Labor Committee, I come before you today to testify in support of Senate Bill 984.

The right to negotiate as a group for a contract is a right enjoyed by thousands of our fellow citizens. Last year when Public Act 13-186 was passed -- making SERC a quasi-public agency -- SERC employees were inadvertently left in a grey area of labor law in this country with no legal protection to organize. They do not qualify for collective bargaining rights under the National Labor Relations Act because they are considered to be quasi-public employees, and yet they are not state employees.

S.B. No. 984 would correct that error. SERC employees would not become state employees under this legislation -- meaning that there would not be a major fiscal impact upon the state. But the bill would give SERC employees the basic rights and protections that other public employees enjoy under Section 68 of the Connecticut statutes. This legislation does not force them to join a union -- it simply gives them the option to do so.

SERC professional staff have worked side by side with state employees to help carry out the federal and state regulations that guide the work of education. Many of the staff at SERC left administrative and teaching positions in school districts throughout the state, leaving behind local collective bargaining protection to join the ranks of SERC because of the important work of this organization. SERC's professional staff carry out duties similar to those other public employees handle in the education arena, and many have advanced degrees.

In short, this legislation is a positive step that would give SERC employees greater stability and democracy in their jobs. So I encourage you to join me in supporting S.B. 984.

I will be happy to answer any questions you might have about this measure; thank you for your consideration.

Rep. Andy Fleischmann

18th House District, West Hartford